

THE END OF THE DAY

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THE END OF THE DAY

FOR REVIEW

THE END OF THE DAY

BY
SYBIL GRANT

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
LIMITED LONDON

THE END OF

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NOTE—H.M.A. : His Majesty's Airship

THE END OF

*At the fall of the night when day is ended
By darkness, stillness of stars, befriended,
The end of the day has come at last.*

*They can part us—the hours slow moving, cruel
While work and weariness fight a duel.
Thank God at length they are in the past !*

*Whether you are here in the actual presence—
We are together at last -- the essence
Of union—holding each other fast.*

THE DAY

THE UNSEEN PRESENCE

NEIL

At first everything is drowned in grief; and then the conviction of nearness—of his unseen presence—grows until there seems only the veil of earthly vision between. Also as if—during those first hours of sorrow—a watch were set to fend off the invading cares of life: which try and throng—as of set purpose—between us and what really matters. If we only had the understanding to profit by this truce would it mean the beginning of a new intercourse—the dawn of a new hope?

To-day your spirit swung
Clear from the shadows and the cries,
Vain words on which our days are hung:

The tides that synchronise

To bound our range
Of dreams half seen before they hide,
That in our haste we brush aside;

Our haste to live—

To fret through narrow years before we reach
The truths that Death—they say—alone can
teach.

THE END OF

Not tired enough for sleep,
Not old—nor sad—enough for peace,
Such is for tired steps that creep,
Longing for their release.

But like a sword
Leaping from some forgotten sheath,
So did your soul encounter Death
Who symbolised
For you (and that is where the difference lies)
Not sanctuary: supremest sacrifice.

Naked as we are born,
The sudden, bitter, core of things
Defenceless must our souls discern;
For myriad phantom thoughts take wings
When faced by Fate.
“Experience, Time!” How wisdom lied!
In one short hour—since you died—
The book of grief
Lies read from end to end, and nothing more
Can add a word unto the printed score.

THE DAY

And must then, with the years,
Beyond my poor and straitened scope,
Your spirit grow, till dim with tears
The fair white plains of Hope
Fade from my sight?
Vague phantasies of paradise,
Those empty creeds we thought so wise
Before you died,
Somehow they fail us now, out-worn, out-grown,
Now you are not—they all seem turned to stone.

Then spoke a whispered voice
Quite suddenly, as I despaired,
"There is no Death—believe—rejoice.
Why, if you only dared
Break through the hedge
Of creeds grown like a thicket round
The simple truths: your soul unbound
Will know and feel
Unseen he moves as near you as you will,
His spirit lives the same, and loves you still."

THE END OF

Like swallows overhead
Whose slanting pinions poise and dart,
Your jests, your laugh, the words you said
Winged right across my heart:

The weaver Time
Wrought all your days from shining thread:
I will not own that you are dead;

I realise
You now so near; my chiefest dread to lose
This sense of harboured presence live and close.

Tell me—what can I do
To keep that presence here,
The consciousness my whole life through
That you in truth stand near?

Just now it seems
You are indeed so close at hand
If I but knew, could understand!

'Tis I who feel
A helpless sense of groping, like the blind
Stumbling and left far—ah! so far—behind.

THE DAY

I cannot reason yet,
For oh! the Hill of Tears is steep!
But yet I feel a watch is set
 At first round those who weep:
 So to restrain
The hostile powers of stress and strife
We wilfully miscall our life.
 Can I not seize
This interlude and build a barricade
For ever—then Defence were surely made?

Is it in very truth
A radiant and a mystic chance?
As fugitive and glad as youth,
 Brief as a backward glance:
 This curious pause—
A chance that we must swiftly take,
Offered us once for Pity's sake;
 That if I miss
So will I lose you, you will drift from me
To the pale guard whose name is Memory.

THE END OF

Teach me to keep this hour
Fast between my expectant hands,
Before the sentries lose their power:

And—if God understands—

I will have won:

I will have cheated Fate and Death.

I will not lose you if my faith

Can hold the thought,

But if I weaken—then the hour will pass

Just as the image from a looking-glass.

Ah! once that noisy horde*

A foothold has, by chance, regained,

What faintest hope of peace restored,

What sense of you retained?

Just aching loss,

Forever sightless, speechless pain,

Behind the daily work and strain.

Forgetfulness

Were better than such useless pain to bear

Cruelly aimless, needlessly unfair.

* The armies of adverse force.

T H E D A Y

But, if your spirit stays
Though hid from me behind a veil,
And walks beside us through the days,
Can we entirely fail?

If, when we choose,
We still can seek a sure retreat,
A garden where our spirits meet:

The real life
Unfolding slowly till it shall appear
A laughing rose, beyond all Fate and Fear?

THE END OF

THE TOPMOST BOUGH

I dance and sing my song of joy,
Laughing at Nature's whims and moods.
I see her gay, or fierce, or coy,
I catch the whisper of the woods.
Far, far, above the crowds and dust
I sing of joy because I must.

Ah! little stars that tremble so
At the caresses of the night,
We watched last spring and summer go
Each from our solitary height.
Till autumn stole my leaves from me
And sent them riding to the sea.

Just then it seemed my life was done,
That, tortured by the winter gales,
My courage sank: sad and alone,
When hope is lost what else avails?
Let go my failing grasp, and fall
Down to the earth, and end it all?

T H E D A Y

Then suddenly a message came
Just as life grew too hard to bear:
So gentle—scarce it seemed to blame
My cowardice: a bird sang clear—
Brave sentry on the dreaming lawn—
Straight up into the heart of dawn.

Next day: deep in the grass down where
The timid wild dove shrinks and broods,
Lo! I espied at last the fair
Gold cohort of the crocus hoods.
A breeze called, "Little bough, be brave,
And you shall have a flag to wave!"

Now, later still, the glad sun sets,
And the day saddens, loth to die.
The ground grows dim with violets;
Primroses—white as moonlight—lie
Claiming their bashful privilege
Of hiding near the sturdy hedge.

THE END OF

Henceforth I hold my simple creed,
Always I turn towards the skies
Which bring me comfort in my need
However loud the tempest cries:
(’Tis Winter sadly lingering
To kiss the white feet of the Spring).

So when the noise from jostling crowds
Comes climbing from the stifled towns,
Seek solace from the racing clouds
That bring glad tidings from the downs.
A simple secret this: the art
To keep the soul aloof, apart.

And he who will refuse to let
Youth and the joy of life be killed,
His soul be caught within a net,
Can find his fond desire fulfilled:
Will sing, like me, upon my tree;
Will sing because his soul is free.

THE DAY

SONG OF SEPARATION

I hear the wind run kissing through the corn.
Now, sliding down the steeps of darkness, comes
Charging past clouds all scattered and forlorn
A gallant air: it is the marching drums,
Leading battalions of the black night rain.
Spirit immortal I—and Day is dead!
So you and I, now cruel Day lies slain,
In some scant measure may be comforted.
Each hour has passed, as sombre as a nun
Keeping us parted: longing, passionate,
Who now, by Sleep released, may meet as one.
Yet, since our bodies must lie separate
That fret and grieve apart,—let them drink deep
From the full flagon of thy mercy, Sleep.

THE END OF

GOODNIGHT SONG

You lay and smiled across at me—

The day was drifting out of sight,
Relentless towards eternity

Our perfect hour was taking flight,
Some flowers floated in a bowl.

I stayed where I could watch your face,
It was as though Love lightly stole

Forth from some secret hiding-place.
We did not feel the need to talk:

A sense of joy there seemed to bloom
(Coming to those whose spirits walk

Together) in that silent room,
Like roses through the dusk; it seemed

A silent laying on of hands,
Happier than we had ever dreamed,
The perfect Love that understands.

* * * *

A red flag dipping in the West,

A star to crown the poplar tree,
Some swallows stirring near their nest,

A breeze that round the corner free
Escaped to race the clouds at last,

One little bird that loved to sing;
The outside world now dying fast.

Not much to need remembering!

THE DAY

THE TRIAL FLIGHT

TO H.M.A.

R. 24

Rare stars were hanging like a broken chain
 Flung from fantastic battlements;
Scourged and beleaguered by the bitter rain
 Crouched sodden huts and tents.
Searchlights: accusing fingers, played
With darkness, now and then betrayed
 The steadfast outline of the Shed.*
 Now all the world is cold, and numb as lead.

Save where, against the tired, unhappy skies;
 Forgotten by the twilight, clings
A slender wraith of sunset; listless dies,
 Lost with forgotten things,
Unseen, slow pacing to and fro,
Whilst hours come and hours go,
 And like a wave the darkness falls—
 Listen: how once again the great wind calls!

The Ship is ready; in the Shed made fast,
 And hurtling sleet—like hostile spears
From jealous gods—she hears not, now at last
 The dawn of triumph nears,
Elusive victory would seem
To set a crown upon a dream.
 Work weary, rest—it is your right;
 While sentries guard your finished work to-night.

* Inchinnan.

THE END OF

Expectant silence hangs about the place
Just now: an armed neutrality,
A sudden truce, a halt, a breathing space.
To-morrow, we shall see
The dream's fulfilment, when the doors
Fling wide, and past the clouds she soars
(For frets of earth, and hurts, and jars
There is no home among the quiet stars).

The sounds of early night-fall now decrease,
Sleet changes to a hint of snow,
Even the wind's low chant is hushed in peace,
The stillness seems to grow,
As if, concealed beneath a pall,
The world no longer breathed at all.
What fancies hold in magic grip
To-night the spirit of the dreaming ship?

Perhaps afar already she can see
Visions of sleeping, shining hills,
Of life outside—of strength, and liberty,
The joy that peace distils,
Of gulls that scatter, call and wheel
Below her sweeping, lambent keel,
Of lands that bear her company
To fade away at length before the sea.

THE DAY

Radiance of autumn woods all gold and rust
Or, throbbing through a summer night,
Ghosts of grey cities dumb—as summer dust,
Curved harbours gay with light,
A distant gun, a syren's croon,
Swift rivers laughing at the moon.
How feel the winter's slow despair
Who need not notice that the trees grow bare?

And floating slow through heather-coloured skies
His heart leaps till he laughs aloud:
Who tracks—when, far below, a dark world lies—
The sun beyond the cloud.
Surely it is a perfect thing
To meet the coming of the Spring
First in the skies? Ere yet they know
The Spring is here, those earth-bound men
below?

So when the hour came, and out of sight
Across the snow-wreathed hills next day,
Ready and eager for the trial flight,
She went upon her way.
The wireless whispered all went well,
But what the wireless did not tell
Was that, upon the sky patrol,
To-day another ship had found her soul.

THE END OF

SPRING LAID HER HAND UPON THE THORN-TREES

Spring laid her hands upon the thorn-trees,
The thorn-trees with their heads bowed—
Lightly; half shyly, half caressing,
The touch of those hands brought a blessing:
For, with the coming of the dawn,
Rose wreaths and snow wreaths crowned the
thorn.

THE DAY

TO A TREE

Swiftly the shy, enchanted light,
Through worlds as still and dense as night,
Came leaping in a clear cascade.
Past clinging touch of amorous leaves
And precipices that are made
By branches weaving nets of shade,
Darting, as tender and as bright
As eyes when tears are just in sight.

Ah little tree! complete, serene;
Tell me: what does your secret mean?
As though your spirit caught its breath
And, passionately listening,
Eager, aloof, still drawn as death,
Holds fast some sanctuary of faith
Against the anxious, terrified
And ever restless world outside.

I look up: past your boughs that point
Whither? And why should Peace anoint
Your head as with a crown? Who knows
Whether thus inarticulate
You do not minister to those
Who seek the kingdom you enclose?
Better than any spoken creed
Is just to wish the Soul god-speed.

THE END OF

WAR BRIDE AND NOW WAR WIDOW

Is Life indeed a masquerade
And Love the light on a dagger's blade?
Remembrance still may hold to this
Your swift glad tenderness, your kiss,
 The clinging of your arms.

There is no Death while this thing lives,
The heritage of the heart that gives
Small things, but precious none the less;
Your soft low cry of happiness
 That crowned the love I gave.

Soaring spirits that found release
Linked hands with Joy at the feet of Peace,
Supreme Content that—like a tide—
Rose to shut out the world outside
 For just a little space.

What of the pain that never rests,
The empty aching between my breasts?
Misery of thoughts that throng,
Misery of arms that long
 To hold you close again?

T H E D A Y

So much there is I understand
Of the loneliness on sea and land,
The restlessness of lonely seas,
And lonely figures on their knees
 At lonely wayside shrines.

Wondering skies that toss and fret
A drifting gull like a vain regret
And, far away, a twisted frieze,
Frayed edges of dim distant trees
 Stretch, grieving, to the hills.

What if Fate, cruel, delights to play
With the hours of the age-long day
As one by one I number them,
Pale roses on a languid stem.
 (What else have I to do?)

There is no man that understands
How a woman works with head and hands
While still her secret life is wrought
Within the citadel of thought
 And this is all that counts.

I have my treasure still to keep
In spite of sleepless hours that creep
Till mocking fate To-morrow brings;
Till Night, black panther, backward springs
 From the white throat of Dawn.

OUTSIDE THE CONVENT

Like lilies hooded on dark stems they droop
Clear drawn against the January sky:
Each sister pacing slowly, and alone,
The path that hems the green robe of the lawn.
In summer and in spring enclosed from view;
Now, when the sentry poplar trees are bare,
One sees like looking through uplifted hands.
And right across me, in an anguish, sweeps
The thought of how these solitary hearts
Must ache when first the tender voice of

Spring

Calls through the Winter silence, calls to me
Of being held close to my dearest—sings
Of ecstasy: a radiance that transcends
All spoken wonder—in a rush of light
Ascending through recurring space to laugh
Right up into the very face of Joy.
I shut my eyes and seem to feel his hands
Strong, warm upon me; and the voice that stirs
Some corner where my spirit hides and waits
Longing and listening: captive to the lure—
The mouth that drives me mad; until I want
To kiss his life away, the quiet strength:
Essence of tenderness, till I, who doubt
All things and everyone, must need believe
And know I hold my dream: a living truth.

THE WIND AND THE TREE

The pine tree tosses in a spate
Of troubled green against the wind:
As though she would evade her fate,
 Loth to be left behind.

They struggle—half in ecstasy
And half in restless misery.

* * * *

So lovers give themselves before
The dawn and—driven by the stress
Of parting—love each other more
 To make the parting less.

THE END OF

ARMISTICE-DAY, 1920.

As though in memory his head was bowed
The sun at first lay hid behind a cloud.
Or else they came between; from that far host,
Who brought us victory, and who are lost
To our short-sighted eyes; with silent tread
Coming to march near those that call them dead.
Through waiting streets they troop unseen
who gave

All that they knew of life—to hold and save
The spirits' heritage: mystic, divine:
Threatened, attacked, in vain by driven swine.*
Think you I can forget? No day shall pass
But hears your name! Cloud shadows over grass
Less light to hurt, less lovely than the thought—
Ah! more—the certainty that grief has brought—
Of you unchanged. What else remains the same
As when men grew to gods? By spirit flame
Kindled past taint of lies, and cheating gold:
A world on fire, to-day a world grown cold.
Where treachery runs loose, men think in herds
And politicians make brave war—with words!
High in the clean delight of freedom—wise,
You watch who saved us; can we meet your
eyes?

Or hear: "We gave all that we had to give,
For this laid down our lives: that *you* might
live."

* Gadarene.

THE DAY

NOW SET YOUR HEART AT REST

Now set your heart at rest, the drooping Day
On Night's dark shoulder leans her head, and lest
She wake, the lively wind has crept away.

Now set your heart at rest.

And, my beloved, if troubled thoughts molest
Your peace to-night—to send your dreams astray
I share them with you—I who love you best,
Just as I share your joys and griefs by day.
So long as I can share these I am blest
With all I want—Good-night; this is to say

Now set your heart at rest.

THE END OF

THE LOST VERSES

Ah, yes!—of course you know,
Those verses that we might have sung
We lost them long ago!
Returned from whence they sprung
Or was it only yesterday?
But all the same they would not stay.

Went singing softly past
Or dancing round in girandole,
Sometimes in eddies fast
Or, pausing lightly, stole
All that we try so hard to hide:
The dream we keep to kneel beside.

Again they dart and fly
Straight diving from the radiant sun,
Or shadows—floating by—
Luring us one by one.
And in the hour of passion's heat
Timing their steps to each heart-beat.

T H E D A Y

Like sudden milestones white
Or search-lights that at length reveal
 What years have hid from sight:
 What darkness would conceal.
(Faint light of stars across a pond
Betrays the stealthy track beyond).

They leave no clue behind
Except a living, dear, regret.
 One hears them in the wind
 Or when the sun has set.
Knowing no song we yet may sing
Compared with these were anything.

There is a sadness too
About the poet's servitude.
 Forever we pursue,
 Forever they elude;
Until some cry that they deceive,
And others yield up chase to grieve.

THE END OF

Yet who can say farewell?
Clinging to some elusive hope,
Some jack-o'-lanthorn spell,
Though far beyond our scope—
Each one still longing while he lives
To catch up with the fugitives.

And what if, after all,
They do not really fly—but lead?
Not to elude, but call—
To urge us on indeed,
Waiting in tender recompense
Until our spirits pass from hence?

Not to the famous dead,
But just to him that loved them most;
That his soul may be fed,
The verses that were lost
Will meet him when this earthly vision dies
Caught in a net of stars beyond the skies.

THE DAY

A TINKLER'S LOVE SONG

Beneath the sheltered and dry hedgerow,
Out of the wind both snugly curled,
We can watch the stars as thick as snow—
Secure, at peace with all the world.
Holding your little, lovely feet
Close to my heart—my love, my sweet.

Across the country we two would go,
None to hinder us as we pass;
With none to say either yes or no—
Over the silent dreaming grass
Where, with white veils, the gentle dews
Mask the valley of sleeping yews.

I'd teach you love through the summer night,
Teach you life through the golden day;
Set to a music of sheer delight,
Tread together the Secret Way,
Guarded by flowers, cloud white—sea blue:—
(All the dreams in the world come true).

THE END OF

Love is a lamp that makes all things clear:
Trouble and wrong and frets have died
With nothing in Life or Death to fear—
As we count Life and Death (outside).
Life but a shadow, after all,
Death the dusk when the shadows fall.

Only a tinkler! I hold you close:
All I want upon earth is mine.
Language fails: whether rhyme or prose,
Swings in the wind: an empty sign.
It's oh! the bells of Heaven ring.
You make my song too sweet to sing.

THE DAY

PRO PATRIA VOLANS*

TO H.M.A.

R.34

Neither for merit nor reward;

A higher glory.

Proudly, for all the world to read—

Her legend, sang and soared
Into the dawn beyond the seas.

Comes—with the sheathing of the sword

A splendid story.

Holding, in three short words, a creed;

Striking the noblest chord.

For are there greater words than these?

War, peace, man's laws, the council board,

Are transitory.

But one brave, single-hearted deed

Outlives the written word;

Clear as a star—till stars shall cease.

* The motto on the prow of R34, the first airship to cross (and re-cross) the Atlantic.

THE END OF

INTER NOS

The Day is lost, and lo! her lover Night
Seeks her in vain; as in a pool a stone
Is cast—so is she vanished from his sight.
Lonely he mourns upon his sombre throne;
So, in this solitary room, alone

I stay, and simple words keep time
And run themselves into a rhyme:

You are one day dearer,

I am one day nearer

To the day we meet.

At those deep, silent, wells of tenderness
We bridge so surely when together here,
Could any one less happy even guess?
And do you ever feel that subtle fear
Which comes to catch me unawares, my dear?

Making me in my sudden pain

Turn to that foolish rhyme again:

You are one day dearer,

I am one day nearer

To the day we meet.

THE DAY

The fear is this: "Life is so very short,
And Time so jealous, so exceeding swift,"
Yet I know we are right and that we ought
To sacrifice to this: Life's dearest gift.

And all the while Eternity
Is sitting watching Time go by:

You are one day dearer,

I am one day nearer

To the day we meet.

THE END OF

Help me remember: waiting and alone,
The hour is coming when you hold me close;
The hour that will faithfully atone
And that no man may hasten, ah! who knows
The eager ecstasy that comes to those
 Who care enough to pay the cost,
 The sacrifice that hurts the most:
 You are one day dearer,
 I am one day nearer
 To the day we meet.

THE DAY

DROPPING THE TRAIL

TO H.M.A:

R.36

"Stand by to drop the Trail"—home from the
skies

The grave wind chanties, and the musing stars
Back to encounter turmoil, smoke, and wars:
A poor exchange for Heaven's high harmonies!
All night the ship has flown: serene and wise
Upon an even keel; against her cars
Rain beat—as restless fingers fret guitars:
Lightly and without heed. Fair paradise
Of moon clouds followed in our wake—Content
Encompassing us: sweet, unearthly, sure,
Alive as any presence; it seems plain
To those whose duties lie on high is sent
This gift: born of the clouds radiant and pure.
Stay with us till we seek the stars again.

THE END OF

THE LASS WITH THE DREAM ON HER FACE

At the fall of the night
When the long hills were sleeping
And stars began keeping
Their vigil of light,
White feet in the heather,
Grey eyes on the water,
She held the boat's tether—
The fisherman's daughter:
The lass with the dream on her face.

She was counting the tide
And it's oh! Was she wishing
Someone at the fishing
Safe home at her side?
Or, eyes wide in wonder
At all the world's meaning,
Just watched the waves sunder,
No thought intervening:
The lass with the dream on her face.

THE DAY

Would she fail? Would she find
Life a meaningless riddle
Just jogged to Time's fiddle?
Or would Fate be kind?
She went her way singing,
I wished her a blessing:
That Love would be bringing
An end to her guessing,—
The lass with the dream on her face.

THE END OF

SUMMER SONG

Always the humming of the bees
 Around the summer roses,
Close to the silent, listening trees,
 Down where the noontide dozes.
Lithe winds, elusive spirits,—creep
 Past gardens lying fast asleep.
The grasses stir like drowsy seas.
Always the humming of the bees
 Around the summer roses.

THE DAY

PIERROT PERDU

This little nothing happened yesterday.
Across the public gardens—where in vain
Geraniums tilted heads to see
Flat empty paths:—hard to restrain
As laughter—tossed a sudden melody.
I heard the bells go dancing in a chain
Like children hand in hand, and far away,
Then silence—dismal silence, dismal rain,
And dripping chairs crouched close for company.

High, like a lamp, I hung my thought of you
To keep the damp and wretchedness outside—
(When nothing matters—nothing can!)
The slow grey rain drew close to hide
That ugly town, those gardens tired and wan
Tricked out in warring colours—striped and pied.
Trees hung reproachful heads to mourn the view.
How often Beauty must protest:—denied,
Defeated by the anxious mind of man!

THE END OF

Dejectedly, with weary feet, and loth
To journey further—all in black and white,
And carrying a mandoline,
There slipped across the sullen light
The saddest figure I have ever seen:
Pierrot lost in the dusk—a lonely sight
With draggled wings—like any storm-slain moth
Hopeless and lost—as on this gloomy night,
Without that inward joy, I might have been.

THE DAY

TO ANY TALKER

Words seem, to you, a string of shining beads,
And Life is just the string
On which they thread: supplying all your needs
To suit both joys, calamities, and creeds,
Nor will you heed the Destiny that breeds
An hour no words may sing.

You play with words, sit in the sun and bask,
Whilst with a smiling eye
To-day peers at you, hidden by a mask!
Contentedly you ply your pleasant task.
How will you meet the hour, I sometimes ask,
That waits you by-and-by?

Last agonies of love, can words paint these,
Or make you really see?
A skein of wind caught fast between torn trees,
Or the sure hand of Dawn that comes and frees,
Just as another hand brings sure release:—
The hand of Death to those sore agonies
In their captivity.

Ah! When your beads are scattered and astray!
Then while they useless lie,
I wonder will you find how light they weigh—
At last, when there is nothing left to say?
Lighter than footsteps that have died away;
Less than a broken sigh.

THE END OF

THE DREAM PATROL

TO H.M.A.

N.S.1

Nothing but darkness and the shadow of
darkness.

* * * *

When the Holy Hour guards the birth of Dawn.
No first skimfooted light that shyly peeps
Across soft breasts of cloud; no hint of life,
This Holy Hour—the last sweet hour of Night.
When all the world kneels speechless, wonderful,
And with united soul keeps secret truce.
The virgin air: new woven, exquisite,
Unbreathed as yet, uncrossed by wing,
untouched

(An air too pure and rare for us to know),
During this Hour is hallowed, dedicate
To all the dreams that are about to die.
The Dawn, newborn, will—all too soon—declare:
“The truce is ended”; racing hand in hand
With ruthless Day to harry Man their slave.
No living thing, till then, may urge or dare
His presence in this wondrous atmosphere.

* * * *

T H E D A Y

"What is this sound like a great heart
throbbing?"

Challenged the night; to whom answered
straightway

The tired stars, now so soon disbanding:

"A stir as of mighty, soaring, pinions
Did bring us thronging to the edge of heaven—
Lo! A stranger through the shadow climbing.
A Ship escaping—like a soul—from bondage,
Swift ascending, heard the sacred music
And so has won the freedom of the skies."

Truly: as she climbed the cliffs of darkness,
Suddenly there rose below the stillness
Less than a song: a low, sweet, whispering,
Hushed soft as dreams: tender as caresses
(The long caress that hungers round farewell),
And the secret of this hidden music?
When night falls, and singing-birds are sleeping,
Their spirits leave them through bright
spheres to stray

Just for a few ecstatic, numbered hours
Bathe in the pools of immortality.

You: who love the fluting of the cuckoo,
Who draw enchantment from the voice of birds,
Listen once more when the sun is setting:
Here sounds no sadness at the flight of day.
Rather you notice an added sweetness.

THE END OF

Their task daylong to bring consolation
They reap their guerdon, in that ecstasy
Of which they must not tell when they awake.
(Yet one singing-bird there is who forfeits
Unmeasured, unimagined liberty
Just to sing of love on earth in springtime,
For his little heart is full to breaking
With the love and longing that he cannot
Express within the limits of the day.)
At length, when these liberated spirits
Return at last reluctantly to earth—
There comes a pause, just before their waking.
Whoever then hears that lovely murmur,
Divine farewell to what they must forget—
To the radiant visions they are leaving;
Differing as much from daytime singing
As fairy dancers from spruce marionettes,
To him who has the luck to overhear
There comes at once the heritage unseen,
There comes at once the freedom of the skies.
So the Ship sped; safely through the darkness
Unscathed; though it was still the Holy Hour,
And, followed by that dreamy murmuring,
Crossed sleeping country frosted thick with may
Hedges like ribbons pointing out the way
Snow-white among the shadows—all too soon
The Dawn was coming; driven from the sea.

THE DAY

A breeze leapt dancing like a nymph of joy
Diving and playing round the Ship; and hummed
A merry little song—the Ship herself
Named from the sea*—quivered her slender
length

And glittered in the sun—a thousand scents
Rushed upwards from the earth, the world
awoke!

And, down below, the turmoil and the fight,
The noise that never ceases, and the wrongs,
Injustices and wrath, and pale intrigues
Spun fast their slimy webs, but all around
The silver Ship was peace; amongst the free
There is aloofness; a serenity—
Untroubled. Far above the crawling dots
That, really men, look just like angry ants,
She flew—now curving inland from the sea;
Past fevered towns whose nervous fingers clutch
Ever more land and, swollen with their wealth,
Grow uglier still from vanity—the Ship
Could see them in their just proportion small
As bee skeps—and their bloated pettiness,
So—hastening gladly, made the woods of Kent.
Here towns and factories are soon forgot;
Even the trains—like furtive lizards—hide
Quickly, as though they knew their presence
must

* N.S.—North Sea.

THE END OF

Sin against beauty—skirt the woodlands wide,
And hurry out of sight: and oh those woods!
Trees, singly, make a separate appeal;
The plane-trees, standing with their weary feet
Blistered by paving-stones in city streets
And lifting wistful heads to find the stars.
The oak; so strong he shouts aloud for strength.
The ilex—dreaming of forgotten gods.
The silver birch that sways upon the hills,
And laughs for very joy; and lonely pines,
And brooding cedars spreading faithful wings
Around the house they love, and beeches proud,
So proud that nothing grows beneath their shade.
And holy yews, and fragrant outlaw firs
Close to whose feet the little people sit
Upon their scarlet thrones; and crusted elms
Who turn the lighter edges of their leaves
So that their aspect changes in the sun
Sudden and gentle as my father's smile.
But woods and forests all seem holy ground
With golden depths, and long aisles leading far,
Ending as suddenly—in open space;
Perhaps a dryad's tryst or wood-god's lair,
Or little people's sanctuary. Sometimes
I wonder how I ever come to dare
Wander in woods, where thousands stand on
guard
To keep their secrets from me. Sudden leaves

THE DAY

Whirl like a signal, sudden silences
Catch at one's heart, even the wood-doves sound
A warning note sometimes; and thick as thatch
The trees bend jealous heads and oust the sky.
Now as the shining Ship floats slowly by,
Up rise a cloud of pigeons; blue as smoke
From forest altars—such a flash of wings!
Who sent them forth in silence? Mystery
Dwells ever in the precincts of the woods.
And seen thus, from the open candid sky,
They seem to hold the secrets of the world.
Just now and then a parting of the trees
Showed tranquil ponds—like contemplative
eyes—

Fringed with dark rushes—then the watchful
trees

Again—and southwards to a dreaming sea
So calm the Ship seemed poising; held between
Two skies of equal, iridescent hue,
Painting their colour on her envelope.
Deep in the water where the shores retreat
The rocks and sands were clearly visible
As though to say: "Here is no mystery!"
Far off—the fretted coastal line of France;
Else, just illusion of infinity.
No living thing except some porpoises
Past Selsey Bill, in romping, careless play.

THE END OF

Then slowly turning on her homeward way
Regretfully she sought the land again
And through the deep, contented afternoon
Straight, purposeful as any homing bird,
Yet glorious with her new-found liberty
She journeyed heading swift and straight for
home.

The western sun was playing make-believe
At forest fires, upon the port-side bow;
Some rooks; a solemn-looking black platoon
Protesting at a scarecrow; distant men
All waving at the Airship, as she swept
Unswerving through the clinging veils of dusk.
A lamp or two—not more; 'tis summer-time,
Some busy soldier camps; and then in sight
Of home, and landing, and the waiting Shed.
A moment, and she pauses; drops the Trail
And gently, silently, reluctantly
Returns from freedom and the living skies,
Caught in the toils of noisy earth again.
Yet still retains her special heritage:
The new-born secret freedom of the skies
Which once the soul of man, or ship, has gained
Will keep for ever. Through this lesser life
That soul will wear a glad serenity,
Will outlive life and laugh at so-called Death;
And singing, singing, singing, reach the stars.

SPRING JINGLE

It seems I cannot bear
To meet the Spring this year.
The racing tumbling skies
Glad that the winter dies.
Rain like an eager wing
Mad with the thought of Spring.
Beneath flushed almond-trees
She steals by slow degrees.
Slowly, half timidly
She falters, finds her way
Past moods of sun and sleet
Up every London street.
Poets break into rhymes,
Green veils hung by the limes
Hide winter's grim retreat,
And, where she lays her feet,
A wild flower appears—
A star blurred—seen through tears;
All dim, and sweet, and white:
Part of the holy rite.
Soft, ardent whisperings
And tender listenings.

★ ★ ★ ★

Without you, all this seems
Mocking, as empty dreams.
It seems I cannot bear
To meet the Spring this year.

THE END OF

VISIONS NEAR AND FAR

They stand close drawn in gaunt grey lines*
Amid the shouting and the songs.
They stood for blood, and wrong, and pain;
And they will never speak again.

Deserted now: forlorn and dumb
This hopeless legion of the lost.
Straight up into the winter skies
They stare—as though with empty eyes.

The crowd pours past in eager waves,
With—now and then—great throbs of joy.
Whilst here and there some gunners stoop
Explaining to a humble group.

Or woman all in black who stays
Looking beyond the happy crowd
At some face only she may see
Across the flags of Victory.

* Some captured guns: just after the Armistice
was signed.

T H E D A Y

Faint—ah! so faint—the singing bells.
Dim—ah! so dim—the leaping lights,
The people—shadows surely those?
That *other one* is much more close.

Before—it was the old or weak
Too tired, too listless to look back;
When they had heard that last dread call
In silence let the curtain fall.

But now the mothers, lovers, sons
It is whom Death essays to part,
Whose spirits cross dividing space,
Whose longing finds a trysting-place.

Submission means surrender here,
A slipping back to make-believe.
And these will not submit, they fight
Towards Reality and Light.

THE END OF

Who taught us Love was strong as Death?
And Love has gathered strength with Time
Till we who live to-day can prove
No force may measure swords with Love.

The War swept worlds asunder—woke
Our souls with weeping,—drove us forth
Love leading, just before the dawn:
To lift the curtain Death had drawn.

Like children taught to fear the dark,
Trembling we drew the folds aside.
Lo! Starlight flung across the gloom
Revealed the old, familiar room!

So little now remains between—
If Love is strong the guns in vain
Have tried to kill,—how new and strange
That there is no such thing as change!

T H E D A Y

Somehow the things that mattered once
Fade now in our extended range.
Where are those numbing fears far fled?
Where are the cramping thoughts we shed?

How much does "real" mean? Alive:
The life that counts, released from Time.
Dead guns, dead creeds alike are ghosts;
Reality—the unseen hosts.

* * * *

Now dusk has crept between the trees,
Passing along that stark array.
What of a brutal power remains
But broken guns and broken chains?

Night gathers to her brooding heart
The sad bruised world of make-believe.
But have we yet known other wars
That brought us nearer to the stars?

THE END OF

SALVE

The palm tree nods a friendly head,
And round the corner laughs the moon

“He cometh soon!”

When, like my heart, the narrow street
Will echo to the passage of your feet

The sure, swift tread

That I would hear, I know, if I were dead.

Look at the strange effects he tries,
The restless painter we call Night!

Splashes of light—

Uneven shadows up and down

The chequered pavements of the sleeping town.

Like serpents' eyes,

Veiled lanterns in a darkness tense and wise.

The crowded houses gravely lean

As though one common hope they nurst

To see you first!

When you are on your way to me

Can there be sight more swift than mine to see?

To guide you by

Their lamps they swing: those sentries of the sky.

THE DAY

My room is dressed in gay attire—
Oh little room, how poor and small
 To hold it all;
That treasure sought so oft in vain
By every human heart in joy and pain:
 The heart's desire;
For soon you will be here, beside the fire.

And in an instant there devours:
(Avenging angel to destroy)—
 A flame of joy.
No feeble flame supinely creeps—
A glorious singing fire that curves and leaps:
 Like sunshine pours
Across the threshold of my lonely hours.

THE END OF

ESCAPE*

While slow winds played a symphony

We seemed to hear and feel

A creature strained in agony

Against a rope of steel.

A weary slave who fain would fly,

Escaping man and man's decree. . .

To win a refuge in the sky,

Seek freedom with the free.

One last mad rush, while no one spoke,

Then, like an angry snake—

The cable: writhing, hissing,—broke,

Dragged in her frenzied wake.

And so—away from bonds that chafe;

The clatter and the strife of crowds,

She leapt to victory: the safe

Sanctuary of the clouds.

Farther and still more far, she swims

Into the shining skies

To seek—watch how she dips and skims—

The land where freedom lies.

One short quiver of rapt disdain,

As though in triumph laughing loud,

Diving, swooping from sight again,

Tossed in a fleece of cloud.

*Spencer I (Kite Balloon), Royal Naval Air
Station, Roehampton.

T H E D A Y

From battle, death, and misery,
 Long fret of chains that burn;
Something has fled to liberty
 That never will return.
She may float back to earth, or fall:
 A tattered, broken, shapeless thing,
Yet still we feel that once for all
 Her soul has taken wing.

Then, from a sea of melting flame
 That soon must cease to live,
The west sent little waves that came
 To meet the fugitive.
Twilight, stooping to intercept,
 Drifting, fading, from our slow sight,
Past waking stars she soared and swept
 To the marble feet of Night.

★ ★ ★ ★

Each tied to our separate chain
 Down in the crowd below,
Some of us felt a stab of pain
 Standing watching her go.

THE END OF

FRAGMENT

On the actual day my power of thought
Will dissolve away; there will just be you.
As shadows die where the sun has kissed;
The I that is I will not exist.
Just you to look at and you to hear:
A joy that would singe, would scorch, would sear
If I were conscious and really knew
That all my dream had at last come true.

And if I should look (I wonder now)
Plainer than usual or tired that day?
Will I dread to meet your eager face?
(Surely work and fret must leave their trace?)
Fate is a woman—she will be kind
And keep you just for that hour love-blind!
But a chorus of demon voices urge
*"You have nothing to wear but that old blue
serge."*

THE DAY

SEE—I HAVE GATHERED SPRING

See—I have gathered Spring
To sing a welcome—in a wordless wonder song.
No words of mine express
My thoughts, so meaningless
Are words: but ecstasy
Lies in the gaiety
Of daffodils: mimosa like a cloud
Of sweetness—sings of joy out loud!
Demure St. Bride's anemone
Exactly like—gay irony—
A glorious passionate mouth!
But oh! it does not need a single flower
To crown my perfect hour.

THE END OF

THE ORDER OF RELEASE

The fire laughs in the chimney,
Twilight retreats outside,
Already Night draws nearer,
For little white stars ride
The tall roofs of the houses;
Whilst right across the street
A new moon glances sideways,
Demurely indiscreet.

The splendid cloud battalions,
In shining armour clad,
Go shouldering each other
Almost as though they had
To win their way through spaces
None but the stars have trod,
And eager, proud, and valiant,
Go fighting up to God.

Ah! happy country-houses,
Hidden in trees and grass;
To whom the birds in summer
Call greeting as they pass,
Round whom the rain goes flying
Like sudden, happy tears,
On whom with tender fingers
Time lays the tale of years.

T H E D A Y

For you the Spring discloses
Her radiant history
And crowns the ancient thorn-trees,
Coral and ivory,
Those crowns she brings from heaven
And gaily bids them wear:
Humbly, as though they felt them
Too wonderful to bear.

Down in the street the houses,
So tired and dim with dust,
Await the long days' ending
As beggars wait their crust,
With serious, curtained windows
Like veiled, observant eyes—
They count the time with patience;
For faith has made them wise.

Enduring through the daytime;
And oh! the day is long;
For them the chill of pavements,
No silence swept with song,
No land the plough has darkened,
Red as a rusty shield;
No distant, secret, forest
Nor dreaming hill and field.

THE END OF

But Night has equal power
 To bind, or hold, or loose.
The moon with crooked finger
 Draws the dark curtain close,
For Night to town and country
 Carries the balm of peace;
Bestows, until to-morrow,
 The order of release.

T H E D A Y

SOON

"Soon I will see you, Sweet!"
Ah! but I wonder when
It is decreed we meet?
Over our eyes grave Fate,
Crossing her cool white hands—
"Soon" is beyond our ken,
"Now" is beneath our feet!

Soon, oh my dear, we meet,
Using that single word
Just like a courser fleet—
To gain a hiding-place
When life becomes too bleak
I whisper, reassured,
"Soon I will see you, Sweet!"

THE END OF

A PARABLE

"I wonder what he sees in her."

Anybody.

If a voice should suddenly say

"Lo! I bestow on you to-day

Feathered things whether wild or tame,

Rose, and silver, or peacock blue."

You know you would give them all away

For just one little grey bird that sings

Straight away from the heart of things

Into the heart of you.

CADENCES

THE END OF

ABOVE THE CLOUDS

Three degrees of harmony : language, music, silence : symbolized
by the flight of an Airship

TO H.M.A.

R.33

O blessed sacrament of silence
Beyond the compass of our dreaming,
Enshrined above all sound, or music,
Or listless touch of words.

For : first and lowliest words, then music
Soaring still higher, like that cadence
The thrush from out his love and longing
Tossed to his mate in spring.

And—last—the peace that stills expression.
Our peace on earth? Mere muted clangour,
A breath caught at the dawn, or twilight—
A hunted, stricken pause.

Up there supreme, sublime, and hallowed,
Calm with the peace of sleeping lilies ;
A marvel passing our conception :
The hush of folded wings.

T H E D A Y

Each pilot through the air ascending
Crosses the intervening stages
A votary: goes humbly questing:
 Through those same three degrees.

Language: forsaken on the earth world,
Then music, from a thousand song-birds,
Abandoned when—the ship ascending—
 Meets visions manifest.

Visions for waking eyes—cloud visions—
Bright veils close-drawn in preparation
For those last speechless wonder spaces
 Brooding above the world.

Those little clouds, like lovers' footsteps,
So swift, and pitiful, and eager.
Or solitary: one white shoulder
 Turned in a pool of blue.

And, closely guarding stainless cities,
Deep brimming seas, uncharted forests:
Javelins gold-tipped: a thousand flambards
 Of burning crysofrase.

THE END OF

Realm of romance that owns no frontiers,
As far surpassing and as transient
As that for which our souls are bartered:
 One hour of restless fame.

Judged here 'mid unconsidered splendour
Mortal applause: a guttering candle
Mortal attainment: piteous trifling,
 Wind spinning in the trees.

Thus, having measured man, and proven
His humble low estate: a phantom,
A grain strayed from far-distant sandhills
 Whirled through infinity.

Before his progress gravely parting:
Just as the gates of God might open
He steers into the sacred stillness
 Floating through cloudless deeps.

Should he have sympathy: a spirit
In tune—then harmonies unending
Bring him the secret of the silence—
 Those wordless mysteries.

THE DAY

And he will feel, kin to enchantment,
New courage flowing to his spirit,
Almost as though his ship were making
The very heart of joy.

See how on earth the fret, the struggle
Are traps set by the powers of discord,
Keeping the spirit from its birthright:
A scroll of victories.

Just as they brought those other perils
Out of the wind, and mist, and darkness,
To weaken and frustrate the pilot
Upon his fighting way.

And reaching to the real, the essence,
Knows now his spirit is immortal,
Sure as a ship come to her moorings
Held by a rope of stars.

Such an abiding revelation,
The heritage of any pilot,
Is more than facile allegory:
The inmost core of truth.

*

*

*

*

THE END OF

What he was shown upon his journey
Is just the record of that progress
Designed for every living spirit
 Since first this world began.

How simple: three degrees harmonic,
Language, then music—mystic silence
Containing both of these—out-running
 Expression, sound, and thought.

Busy on earth these same black forces
Send fear of Death to numb endurance,
Doubt and dismay to cramp achievement,
 Build barriers round the soul.

Archaic, terrifying dogma;
Harps no one wants, and hells as needless;
With man-made laws laid down for angels,
 And arguments for fools.

They stifle us with shifts and sermons,
Confusion masked in cope and vestment,
The soul a thing apart—and higher?
 The soul *is* you or I!

T H E D A Y

The body just a cloak, container
Cast when outgrown, and swift forgotten
With each forgotten life behind us
 Upon our race beyond.

Likewise each life makes reparation
For cruelties, or worse, committed
In earlier lives: to each must sorrow
 Or failure pay the toll.

Unless we halt and claim our freedom
When, hand in hand with revelation,
The real "I" that is my spirit
 Can scale those three degrees.

Swift as the passing of the pilot
May leave what we name speech and music
And still, whilst here upon the earth world,
 Call Heaven to my heart.

I, by myself, am less than nothing:
An instrument just tuned and waiting;
When, drifting through the blessed silence,
 Come harmonies undreamed.

THE END OF

These harmonies: the great white forces
Are mine to summon and assemble,
Whose strength is mine; who make me
welcome

To their sweet company.

In this same life, within this body,
Fulfil the same harmonic progress
Until I follow toward the living,
Divine, most holy source.

And so unfolds the lovely story
That no one has the power of telling,
Whose light is radiance, joy is rapture
Throughout the glowing spheres.

An ecstasy transcending knowledge,
Save now and then—in this existence
True lovers sometimes know its likeness:
Ah! hold that token close!

Finding completion in each other,
Growing in sunshine and in shadow,
Nor life nor death sets you asunder:
Immortal, strong and free.

Passion of body and of spirit,
Bear witness to a perfect union
Sealed to the mystic life together
That climbs above the clouds.

THE DAY

THE CHALLENGE

Down the streets of the city
Night rode his black charger
With silver mane streaming:
Silver mane of stars.
*"Who rides with me—seeking
Away from the City
And through the dim forest
The country of dreams?"*
Behind lighted windows,
The merry gold windows,
Who answered the challenge
That called from the Street?
Some counted their treasure,
Whilst others sat feasting.
*"Who rides with me—seeking
The country of dreams?"*
Behind leaded casements,
Steep, sinister casements,
There spoke in a whisper
A man old and worn.
"What would I with dreaming
Who drift towards silence
So soon now? Keep dreamland
For those who are glad."
Then two laughing lovers
Cried: "We have our dreams here,
Why should we seek further?"

THE END OF

Why should we seek dreams?
Oh! take riding with you
Upon your far journey
Some servant of sorrow,
Some spirit that grieves."
The road, like a serpent,
Twists quick past the houses
As though, in the forests,
It longed to be free.
Just one house leaned forward,
Alone at a corner,
As if it were listening
In silence, in vain.
A single lamp burning:
The light of the sleepless,
*"Who rides with me—seeking
The country of dreams?"*
A woman, eyes burning,
Called forth to the darkness
"Fain would I go with you,
My God! If I might—
And holding forever
The dream of my choosing.
Forget I am lonely,
Forget I am sad,
But I sold my birthright
Of dreaming, and loving:
The heart in my body,
For less than the dust.

THE DAY

There's none born so lowly
But owns his dream birthright,
None poor as who barter
That birthright of dreams.
Now life is but longing,
And I am so tired!
Always grief slays to-day
With dread of the next.
I, curst among women,
Lost all chance to enter
That blessed dream-country,
Lost all right of way.
And you would betray me
To Dawn the white sentry,
Would hurry me backward
To life that is hell.
If Night—you knew mercy,
Then, had I no waking,
Would carry me with you
And drown me in dreams."
Away through the forest
Night raced his black charger,
That desolate challenge
Borne high on the wind.
The galloping hoof-beats
First faint . . . and then fainter . . .
The house leant and listened,

THE END OF

Alone by the road.
The woman drew curtains,
And set back the clock hands:
To drive off to-morrow
That, ruthless, must come.
There's none born so lowly
But owns his dream birthright;
So poor as who barter
That birthright of dreams.

THE DAY

WHEN THE ORGAN WAS PLAYED AT ALL SAINTS*

Bright highways crossed by deep-set lanes
And squadrons riding by,
A standard-bearer, as he rides,
Leans from the saddle-bow,
His laughter falling from miles high,
From down cloud forests in the sky:
Through rushing leagues of space
Pauses, then drops: a supple note:
One moment caught and held
A captive bird between your hands,
Which loosened soars again.
While spirit hosts bend down and gaze
From some far edge of heaven,
A great wind rose, went slowly past
Bugles—like some child's voice—
And flutes stole; slender mountain-streams
On the attendant air
Fleet mists that chase and catch the moon
Then voices cried with rapture; loud
Out loud upon the night,
And ships swept—white, triumphant sails,
On tides of clear delight.

*With my grateful thanks to Mr. Chasteney
(organist).

THE END OF

Fair waves of measured melody,
Trooping across impassioned space,
Singing, untouched by grief or Death,
Of final, conquering ecstasy;
Echoes that faint from joy.
Next—on a sudden—eager pause
Such as you notice when you stand
Near by an open window-frame
Set in a dusty street;—
When Day has gone to call the stars.
A poignant nameless tenderness:
Still as some forest pool:
As deep and sweet as constancy.
Till last came peace transcending peace:
A settling of great wings.

I WONDER

Oh! I wonder why the world
Is so large and cold to-night,
The voice of the clock a dirge?

I hear your voice, if I choose,
Knock at the door of my heart
And feel you close: till my eyes

Destroy my dreams.—See, the moon
Crooks a finger to beckon
Through the fenced trees over there:

They mock at my loneliness,
Dancing slowly up and down
They stoop, posture and angle.

When I was a child I hid
Under the nursery-table,
First drawing the cloth close down.

I hid from the world outside,
The world so great and so cold,
Too great for my childish soul.

T H E E N D O F

But now I know if you came
Up the stairway of my soul,
Across the waiting threshold,

I would make my hands a cup
And hold all my world between:
Just your face between my hands.

THE SPRING AT NIGHTFALL

The wind has dropped to a hush
And set the bracken dancing:
A ghostly dance—in their sleep.
See! Their grey fronds bow and brush
Backwards and forwards glancing,
While—too soft for mortal ear—
Music from the silver horn
Of Luna: diffident and proud,
Luna hid behind a cloud,
Falls like drops of crystal.
By day a merry hazel eye,
Now as silent as a spell,
The sleek pool: black as onyx,
Framed in jealous bramble,
Is become a secret place.
All around is hid and dark.
As I fling my clothes away
What brushed past my nakedness?
Just a honeysuckle trail
Whose fragrant slender fingers
Caressed while yielding passage,
Whose scent breathes on the silence.
I slip in, and round my knees
The water, clinging like a net,
Ice-cold and stinging, tingling
Almost as though it sucked me
Into a sorcerer's trap.

THE END OF

The freedom of the night-fall
Is not for mortals, strangers.
I can hear the little spring
Through the pool run whispering
"Surely you have no right here."
The alders, linked together,
Crowd closely: round their margin
Ride stars, like swinging censers
Above a secret altar.
Against the dark my shoulder
Strikes with a ghostly whiteness.
A pale moth springs to meet me
Up from the waiting grasses
As, climbing out of silence,
I draw my cloak around me.
A stirring in the covert—
Hark! Did I hear a hoof beat?
Did slanting, mocking, peering
Eyes smoulder in the darkness—
Bronze, hairy arm forth reaching
And holding—was it reed pipes?
Wood god whose name is Silence?

* * * *

Dew-drenched grass beneath my feet
Swiftly I regain my camp
Where the patient waggon rests.
So to bed—and thoughts of you.

HESPERUS, THE DREAM HERD

Day drags at her anchor, longing
To slip from the noisy harbour,
Away from the dusty townships—
Across to the pools of night.
Tired trees lean towards fair heavens
Whence stars will come drifting singly
To kiss the breasts of the hill.
Young moon! Spring forth like a dancer
With lovely and curving body—
Shaped like the sheath of a lily;
Poised close to the downcast woods.
Wind with the voice of a wood dove!
Go murmuring of her presence
To the faint and drooping pine-trees,
Till they lift their heads in wonder,
And the burden of the hours
Parts from them like a sigh.
Stranger, draw near from the hillside.
Hesperus—welcome O dream herd!
Speeding to liberate Twilight,
To seek and gather his flock.
Casting a skein evanescent
Down past the sunset, evading
The outstretched arms of the forest,
Falling as far as the moors,

THE END OF

Weaving round heather and bracken,
Ensnaring the stooping boulders,
And stealing a world unawares
Held by the sunset spellbound.
Three times, in a magic silence,
Twilight encircles the world.
The first time the skein is of grey,
As grey as the homing pigeon:
For the dim earth world is grey,
And the colour of cities.
Interchanging again to white:
The colour of far cloud meadows
Where stars lie thick as blossom,
And last is dissolved in blue—
The colour of love and dreaming;
When Hesperus, dropping the skein,
All the world is drowned in dusk.
He stands as a star stands—smiling,
Beckoning from the horizon;
The hastening dreams steal softly,
Obeying that gentle call.
From little croft and from shieling,
Kings' castles built of sapphire,
Black byeways and red rose-gardens;
From ships of the air and sea,
The thin stray fires of a tinkler,
The souls of forgotten singers;
From those who are cast in prison,
And those now about to die.

THE DAY

The lowly dreams that are homespun,
And yet carried high in battle.
All the dreams of earth are mustered—
Save here and there one held captive.
(Even such a dream, my beloved,
Lies hid in thy soul and mine!)
Like a fallen leaf for silence,
A broken whisper for stillness,
Those myriads are pressing, thronging,
Hard on the heels of the night.
All lovers can hear them passing,
The dreams of all the ages.
Ah! Hush, my beloved, and listen,
As with sudden joy we tremble,
Beyond handling or hope of words,
When our spirits meet and mingle
In a world above this world.
And we know they leave a blessing
With the dream that we hold captive:
A salute bestowed in passage
As they gather round their leader,
Hesperus—lord of the Twilight,
Hail! Hesperus, herd of dreams.

THE END OF

THEY SAID

They said—

Ah! You will only find your voice

Through suffering.

Till then—just tinkling music, trifling fare,

An empty sound against the empty air.

* * * *

So do they blind a song-bird's eyes

To make it sing.

To print a letter in this humble place is to run grave risk of such a letter remaining unread, not only by reviewers, whose august glance is proverbially limited to the first pages of any volume, but by every one else.

It must be remembered, however, that this risk is incurred by every printed word, and that this place was chosen for the readers' sake ; because when in the mood for poetry one is disinclined for prefaces.

The letter becomes necessary—first, in order to interpret the title.

“The End of the Day” means the end of the day's work, and will serve, perhaps, to explain and excuse the inevitable atmosphere of starlight and dusk.

Most of the contents were conceived at the end of such a day (although not written down until long afterwards), and most have already appeared in reviews and magazines, the “Unseen Presence” being subsequently reprinted in pamphlet form by the “Poetry Review.”*

The second reason for this letter is a very pleasant one, so far as the writer is concerned, for it is to

**During the War.*

THE END OF THE DAY

thank all those readers of "Dream Songs" and the "Unseen Presence" who have written to me.

Please forgive someone—who is no good at letter-writing—for not having answered before. In several instances this would have been impossible, as there were no signatures. I had always imagined anonymous communications to be the reverse of pleasant—these proved a delightful surprise. Please accept the very grateful thanks that sound so dull and dry; while in particular, to the unknown friends who sent the beautiful drawings and the scrap of tartan—do believe that here is no case of "Long tarrying takes all the thank away."

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